
If you believe you are eligible to vote and encounter difficulty registering, please contact the Montana Election Division, at:

Office of the Secretary of State
Montana Elections Division
P.O. Box 202801
Helena, MT 59620-2801
(317) 232-3939 (voice)
(888) 884-VOTE (toll-free)
(406) 444-9068 (TDD)
www.state.mt.us/sos/Elections/elections.html

If the Montana Elections Division is unable to help you, or to report a problem, contact:

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Voting Section, Rm. 7254 - NWB
Washington, D.C. 20530
(202) 307-2767 (voice)
(800) 253-3931 (toll-free)
(202) 307-3961 (fax)
www.usdoj.gov/crt

This pamphlet is provided for informational purposes only, as an aid to further inquiry. The laws in many states are revised frequently, and may have changed since this pamphlet was issued. It is your responsibility to determine whether you are lawfully eligible to vote, and criminal penalties can result from voting when ineligible or making false statements on a registration form.

Issued December, 2000

U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division



Restoring Your Right to Vote



The right to vote is an important civil right in a democracy as well as a civic responsibility, and yet many persons who have been convicted of a crime do not know whether they are eligible to vote. For both federal and state elections, the right to vote is controlled by the law of the state in which you live. Some states restrict the right to vote for persons who have been convicted of a crime. This pamphlet is intended to help you determine whether you are eligible to vote in the state in which you live, and if so, what steps you must take to be permitted to vote.

What law governs whether my felony conviction limits my right to vote?

The impact of a criminal conviction on the right to vote varies widely from state to state. Whether you can vote after being convicted of a crime is determined by the state in which you live, not the state in which you were convicted.

Can I vote while I'm incarcerated in Montana?

If you are a resident of Montana, you cannot vote while you are incarcerated for conviction of a felony. If you are a resident of another state who is temporarily incarcerated in Montana, you may be able to vote an absentee ballot for your home state. You need to consult the law of your home state regarding both criminal convictions and absentee ballots to see if this is a possibility.

I have been released from incarceration. How do I restore my right to vote?

In Montana, the right to vote is automatically restored upon lawful release from incarceration. In order to vote, you simply must register.

What if my conviction was for a federal crime?

Montana applies the same rules whether you were convicted of a federal or state crime.

What if I was convicted in another state?

The same rules apply for Montana voters even if the conviction occurred in another state.

What happens if I move to another state?

If you move to another state, your right to vote will be controlled by the laws of that state.

What are Montana's other voter registration requirements?

To vote in Montana, you must be a U.S. citizen, have lived in your county for at least 30 days before the next election, be at least 18 years old on the day of the next election, and not have been judged "of unsound mind" by a court of law.

When do I need to register to vote?

Registration is available year-round in Montana. However, in order to vote in a primary or general election, you must be registered at least 30 days before that election.

Where do I go to register?

Registration is available at many places in Montana, including:

- County Elections Administrator
- Secretary of State's office
- public assistance offices
- vocational rehabilitation offices
- job services offices